



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

OCT 08 2003

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

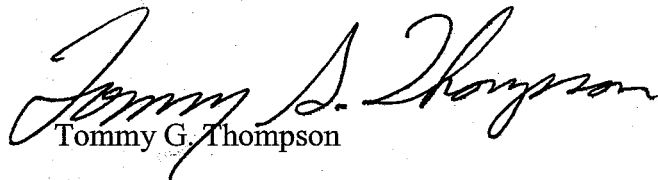
Dear Mr. Markey:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern over the delay in the publication of the regulations implementing the Smallpox Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. I agree that the smallpox vaccination program is vital to the safety of the American people, and that the removal of barriers to smallpox immunizations, such as uncertainties related to compensation for a smallpox vaccine related injury, should be expeditiously accomplished.

I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Health and Human Services has finalized the interim rule setting forth the smallpox (vaccinia) vaccine injury table. It was published in the Federal Register on August 27 and became effective on that date. The Department is currently drafting the interim final rule establishing the administrative policies and procedures of the Smallpox Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. I anticipate publishing these interim final regulations as soon as possible.

I will also provide this response to Congressmen Waxman and Brown and Congresswoman Capps. Please call me if you have any further thoughts or questions.

Sincerely,


Tommy G. Thompson